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Rev. Mr. Blanchard.  
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AN IMPORTANT QUESTION:  
BEING AN  
INTRODUCTORY  
DISCOURSE,

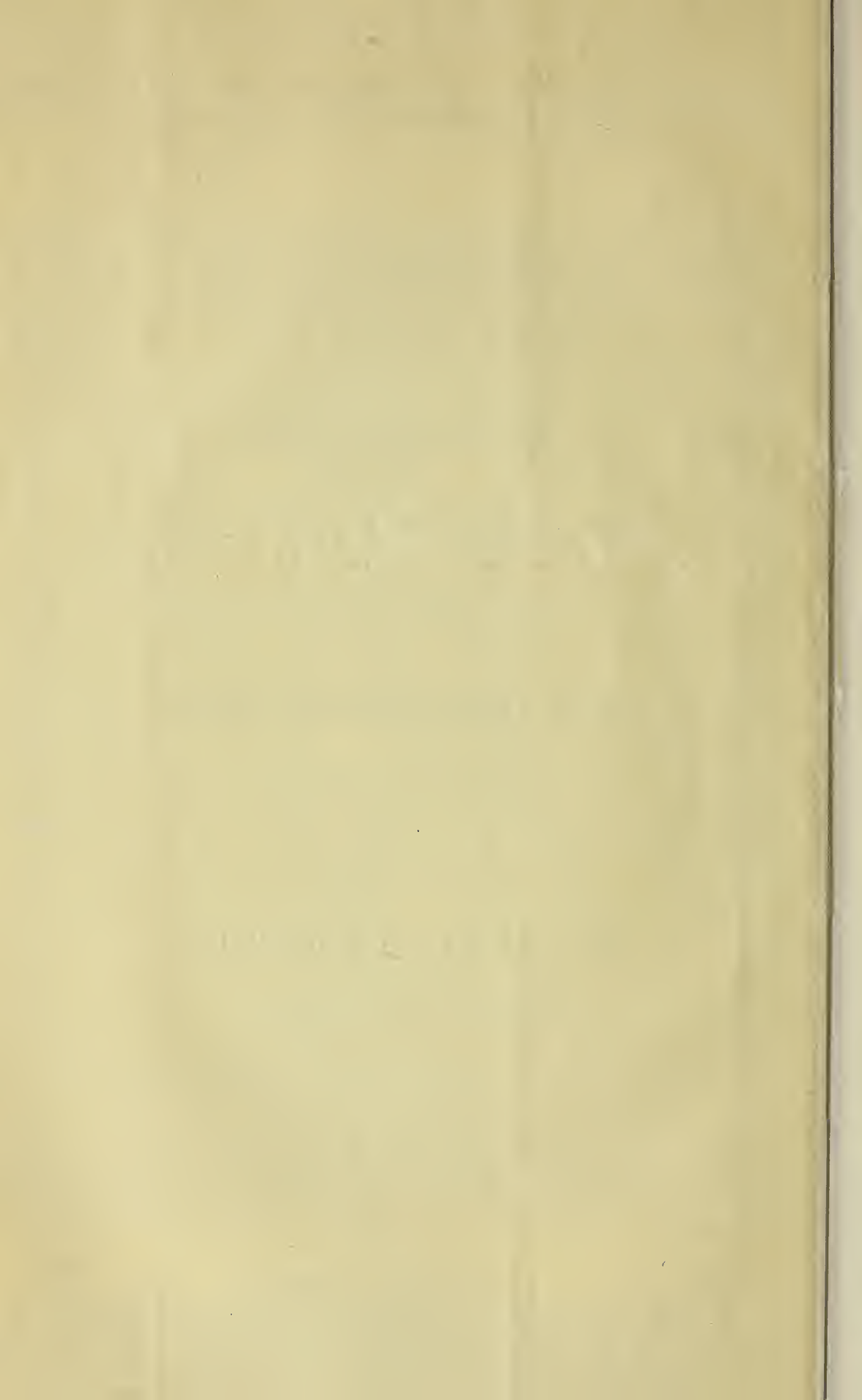
PREACHED BEFORE THE  
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,  
LOWELL, MASS.,

BY THE  
REV. PETER GORDON,

LATE OF THOMPSONVILLE, CT.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

LOWELL:  
J. T. CHESLEY, PR., 21 CENTRAL ST.  
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## INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE.

ACTS x. 29—"Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for : I ask, therefore, for what intent ye have sent for me?"

MY FRIENDS : I need hardly introduce myself to your notice by remarking, that the circumstances under which we are met here this day, are not dissimilar to those which gave occasion to the narrative which I have read. From the first moving of the question, "Will you come and break among us the bread of life?" till the final decision was taken, it has been my daily prayer to God that he would teach me *His* will and *my* duty in this matter : and, if I am not deceived, the hand of God appears in every preliminary step to my taking the oversight of you in the Lord. The very prevalent impression among my late beloved charge, that my mind was fully made up to accept your invitation, prevented them from making even more strenuous and determined exertions to detain me, considering it as vain and useless to make the attempt ; and the defeat of my own intention and desire, even in the event of my acceptance of your call, to spend a few weeks at leisure ere I entered upon the arduous duties of a new relation, all bring me, and I trust will bring you, to the acknowledgment of the overruling providence of God in these arrangements.—With propriety, then, may I say, in the language of the apostle, "Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for : I ask, therefore, for what intent ye have sent for me?"



Before entering upon the merits of the question, we shall invite your attention in the First place, To the characters brought before us in this narrative ; Second : The object contemplated by their interview ; and Third : The interesting and happy results of their conference. And while we speak, may the Holy Ghost, as of old, fall on all of you who hear the word.

I.—The characters brought prominently to view in this narrative are, St. Peter, the Apostle, and Cornelius, the Roman Centurion. The history of the former is replete with interest, and very instructive. He was early called to the Apostleship, by our blessed Lord ; and maintained throughout the whole of his long and eventful life, with but a solitary exception, the character of an intrepid and ardent follower of the Lamb. Honored with the confidence of his Master, he was one of the few favored with the most intimate fellowship, and chosen to behold peculiar displays of His glory while on earth. He was with him in his transfiguration on Mount Tabor. He was with him in his agony in the garden. He was a witness of his resurrection and ascension into heaven. But his present privilege was one of no common kind, inasmuch as it was the entering wedge which was destined to break down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, and declare them both one—one in Divine favor—one in spiritual blessings and privileges, and one as common “ heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.”

This was the first step to the fulfilment of the prophecy—“ It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel : I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.” And it was the first explicit demonstration of the cheering fact, that, “ with God

there is no respect of persons ; but that in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." Such a change in the Divine administration and economy, and such an inroad on the exclusiveness of Judaism, which arrogated to itself the *all* of divine favor, and shut out the Gentile world from any participation in the hopes and privileges of the Gospel, was no less startling to the mind of the Apostle than blessed in its benign results to the uncircumcised heathen. No wonder, therefore, that, at its first announcement, it met with hesitation on the part of Peter ; and that it required the most indubitable evidence to convince him of the fact that, "to the Gentiles, also, God had granted repentance unto life." To prepare him for this extraordinary mission, was he furnished with that vision, the particulars of which are contained in this chapter.

In what an admirable light does this account present the apostle of the circumcision ! who, though strongly wedded to his Jewish prejudices, and cautious almost to a fault, is, nevertheless, open to conviction, and inclined to receive, with meekness, whatever communications God is pleased to make to him. How opposite to this, the spirit of those who are so much in love with their darling systems of religion, (and they may be good,) that they are unwilling to open their eyes, or hearts to information from any other quarter, and least of all from those not of their communion. Though educated in the belief that, "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, belonged the salvation of the Lord," and hitherto, confined within the narrow limits of Judea, he now saw plainly, the finger of God pointing to the enlargement and glory of the New Testament church, which was to embrace all nations, and immediately, without conferring with flesh and blood, he is ready on the morrow to go

and preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Cornelius, on the other hand, was a character, in his station, no less interesting and remarkable. The sacred historian has immortalized his name, and identified him with the "excellent of the earth." As was said of Mary, who washed our Savior's feet with her tears, and anointed his head with precious ointment, that it would be told for a memorial of her in the whole world; so will this devout soldier be held in veneration, wherever piety and moral worth are regarded. How rarely, indeed, have we to record an instance of such devotion in the profession of arms! But God, who has the hearts of all men in his hand, chooses his subjects of grace from quarters often the least likely to produce them; that no flesh should glory in his presence, and "no limits be set to the Holy One of Israel." In the calling of a Cornelius, a Gardner, a Newton, and, perhaps, I might add, a Washington, we see that high station and rank are no insuperable obstacles to genuine piety. Cornelius was of noble birth, for he was of the family of the Cornelii, an illustrious family at Rome, and centurion of the band, or guard, that waited on the Roman governor, at this time residing in Cesarea; yet, none of these apparently untoward circumstances prevented his sharing in that grace of God Almighty, which surmounts all circumstances, and may reach men of all ranks and stations.

Besides; 'The calling, as the first fruits of the Gentiles unto God, of so distinguished an individual—one in such repute even among the Jews themselves, would have a happy tendency to dispel those prejudices which, as Jews, they entertained toward all not of their nation; and prepare them for that song of gratitude with which they afterwards hailed the accession of the Gentiles to "the household of faith." The *means* whereby Cor-



nelius became a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, were, probably, his knowledge of the scriptures, then translated into the Greek language ; together with the fame of Jesus, which was spread abroad, and which, to a mind like his, naturally desirous of investigating the truth, would not pass without notice in reference to the claims he put forth as the Messiah—the promised “desire of all nations.” For it does not appear that the knowledge he acquired could be derived from any other quarter. Not from the Jews residing at Cesarea, for they held no intercourse with the uncircumcised ; nor from Philip, the Evangelist, at this time in Cesarea, for, though commissioned to instruct the Ethiopian eunuch, no such direction was given him, so far as we know, with reference to Cornelius—God designing, through the apostle of the circumcision, to bring to himself the greater glory of making him the honored instrument of much good to the Gentiles also.

And, here, let us pause to admire and adore the rich, sovereign, and efficacious grace of God Almighty, in the whole of these arrangements. Surrounded by the allurements of the world, the temptations of the camp, the facilities for carnal gratification ; at a distance from those inducements to a life of sobriety, virtue, and godliness, Cornelius stands before us, an eminent illustration of all that is devout in religion, all that is lovely in virtue, all that is ennobling and generous in man ! Who shall then despair of the grace of God reaching the hearts of men, however untoward their circumstances, and however far removed by previous habits of indifference, or even of opposition to the humbling doctrines of the cross ? And how confidently may we hope, that, in the faithful exhibition of the truth, “as it is in Jesus,” we shall not labor in vain, nor spend our strength for nought, and in vain. This leads us to consider—

II.—The object contemplated by their interview. This is expressed, briefly, in the 33d verse: “Now, therefore, are we all here present before God, to hear all things commanded thee of God.” It was not a feeling of curiosity that prompted the message to Peter. It was not to gratify their taste by a display of his talents as an orator; or to speculate upon the success that might attend the truths which he uttered, and which he ultimately sealed with his blood. No. It was simply and alone the desire of instruction in the things that belong to our peace; that prevailed; and which ought ever to mark all similar arrangements. From a perusal of the scriptures, Cornelius felt that he needed information, and, by the grace of God, he was eminently favored with a disposition to sit (stripped of all adventitious circumstances, at the feet of Jesus,) and “receive with meekness the ingrafted word, that he might grow thereby.” The scriptures had acquainted him *so far* with the character of God, and the perfection of His holy law, that he felt, by comparing himself and his heart with this “perfect law of liberty,” that he was a lost sinner, and stood in pressing need of a Savior—one mighty to save. It proved to him that there was an awful majesty insulted by our crimes, a pure and perfect law we had violated, and a dreadful penalty incurred, which, like the thunder-cloud, was suspended over the sinner, which he knew not how to avoid, but which it became him, by all possible means, to avert. Previously prepared by the grace of God to receive the truth in the love of it, he desires, like a “new born babe, the sincere milk of the word,” and recognizing in the apostle the person called and sent for that purpose, he addresses him in the language before us, “Now, therefore, are we all here present before God, to hear all things commanded thee of God.” Mark well, I pray you, the statement respecting

these instructions. "To hear all things commanded thee of God." Not what might be gratifying to the pride, or pleasing to the ear of man, but what is "*commanded* thee of God." There is a spirit abroad—it is in the churches—which shews that we have fallen upon the time spoken of by Paul, when men "will not endure sound doctrine, but shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables," departing from "the simplicity that is in Christ."

Now, in the *First* place, we *dare* not preach what God has not commanded us to proclaim in his name, however popular such preaching might be, and however agreeable to the preacher himself to attract an audience by his novelties, carrying them along with him into the boundless and barren field of empty speculations. It would be to preach ourselves, and not Christ Jesus the Lord, to the glory of God the Father. It would be "making your faith stand in the wisdom or conceit of men, and not in the power of God." It would be calling off the attention from the Great Teacher, and the great things of his law, to the poor worm that addresses you, and thus both ruin himself and those who might hear him. It is not forbidden that the *manner* of introducing the Gospel to the notice and observation of mankind be as engaging or interesting as possible, for old truths may be presented in a new dress. It is not denied him who ministers in holy things to employ every argument or motive within the compass of his power, to interest the mind; and secure, by the blessing of God, a lodgment for the truth in the affections and the heart, for this is one great end of preaching. It is not foreign to the nature and design of his commission to call to his aid all that is interesting in science, or expansive in philosophy; all that is deep in research, or profound in knowledge—for all nature, in her vast and varied resources, is "but the varied God," as



in all, seen through all, and to be passionately adored by all. Yet, with all this latitude, and it is vast, we are not permitted to introduce any new doctrine, device, or invention of man in the room of God's ordinance, or to substitute what, in our wisdom, would be an improvement on the gospel plan. We are restricted, under the most solemn sanctions, in all means for the regeneration of our race, to what God has enjoined—to a "Thus saith the Lord," and beyond this we are, under no consideration, permitted to travel, lest we be found entering within a province that does not belong to us—only "keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his word;" and in which you will recognize the terms of our original commission—never to be altered to suit the altered circumstances of the Church, but of perpetual obligation: "Go, and teach all nations; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." We call attention, particularly, to this point; because the neglect of it has been attended with the most disastrous consequences to the purity and peace of the Church. We cannot take up the history of the Church without being strongly impressed with the truth of what I say, and the extreme danger of "departing from the simplicity that is in Christ." The apostles themselves, had not yet ceased from their labors, when false prophets arose; and these, throughout the successive ages of christianity, have done more to wound and corrupt, to mar and destroy her purity and power, than all that has been effected by the ruthless hand of a relentless persecution. I need not particularize; but would simply caution you, as I would caution all, against giving way, at any time, to a spirit of innovation, upon the "foundation of the apostles and prophets—Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."



*Secondly*,—We *must* preach *all things* that are commanded us of God. This embraces “the whole counsel of God”—the whole of revelation—no part of which, as given by inspiration of God, is useless, or to be withheld. Some of these *all things* may be unpalatable, humbling, and uninteresting to carnal minds. They may appear unreasonable, mysterious, and absurd; but, are they, on this account, to be kept back? or exhibited only in the distance, as if we were afraid to look truth in the face? No: so far from it, that we are to declare the whole counsel of God “whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear.”—If we are to withhold the truth till all men are able to bear it, we should never preach at all; or so soften and dull the edge of the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, that it would be no longer “quick and powerful, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, proving itself a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” This would be “daubing them with untempered mortar,” healing but “slightly the heart of the daughter of His people,” laying the flattering unction to their souls, saying, “Peace, peace, when there is no peace.” Not such the preaching of the Prince of preachers, compassionate and kind though he was, and no such palliatives were employed by him to commend the truth to the favor and acceptance of men. He went forth “with his fan in his hand;” he struck at the root of the tree of human depravity; he aimed at purifying the fountain whence issue those streams that defile the soul. Not such the preaching of Paul, or the apostles, or the martyrs, who “contended earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints.” Not such the preaching of the Puritan Fathers of New England, who forsook all for the truth, and founded a church on her rocky shores, where the pure word of God was purely preached. But—

*Thirdly*,—Did we preach “another gospel,” I ask, what

advantage would you derive from it? If God had given another, or better, it would be our duty to receive it; but he has given no other, nor signified his intention of bestowing a better than that which "is mighty to the pulling down of strongholds;" and has, once for all, placed his seal of approval upon the gospel he has delivered to us, by the expression of his fearful displeasure against those who publish another: "If any man preach any other gospel unto you, let him be accursed." Know, then, brethren, that what God has seen proper to reveal, he requires us, imperatively, to proclaim in his name, and to be received by those who hear it, as the wisdom and power of God unto salvation. And, by so doing—by cultivating this spirit of humble dependance and teachableness—what blessings will result from it! Let us be guided in this matter, by considering:

III.—The interesting and happy result of this conference. "Then Peter opened his mouth and preached unto them Jesus." He intimates that "the word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ," was not to be limited to them, but extended in its free offer to all men; for "he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it was he who was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him should receive the remission of sins." And "while he yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." Here, God honored his own ordinance of preaching the word; and so unexpected and surprising was the result, that "they of the circumcision were astonished, because that, on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and glorify God." What a display of the riches of abounding grace! and how remarkable a fulfilment of prophecy: "I will pour out my spirit unto you. I will make known my words unto you."

Here we behold the great and crowning glory of the gospel, as a ministration of the Spirit, the variety of whose gifts and graces adorned the souls of true believers with the beauty of holiness, constraining them to abound in acts of genuine faith, and to walk along the narrow way of godliness, the consequences of which are peace and assurance for ever.

And is this ministration confined to apostolic times? "Is the Lord's hand shortened that it cannot save, or his ear heavy that he cannot hear?" Cannot the life-giving spirit reanimate those dead souls of ours, and quicken us into newness of life? Assuredly he can. The gospel is still mighty, through the Lord the spirit, and we but honor Him when we confide in its efficacy, and rest in the promise: "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground." "Come from the four winds, O breath of the Lord, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live."

Having adverted to the circumstances of this interesting interview, we now return to the question: "For what intent have ye sent for me?" And I have no manner of doubt that, were the question put to each one who signed that call, and united in the prayer it breathes, their answer would be that of Cornelius to Peter: "Now, therefore, are we all here present before God, to hear all things commanded thee of God." And I have, first of all, to request that you will, on no occasion, and at no time, forget this intention; that you will not look upon your call, or my acceptance of it, as a mere matter-of-course—that it is Presbyterial, and that we have acted up to Presbyterial requisition, in proceeding orderly and constitutionally,—but that you keep constantly in view the grand design of all this order and regularity.—We who preach, stand before you as ministers of the gospel—as ministers of God to thee for good—as servants of the Most High God, to shew unto you the way of life and



salvation. We stand like Moses between the living and the dead—as authorized ambassadors of Christ, and, in the name of a greater than Moses, beseeching you to “be reconciled to God;” as your representatives before the great God of Heaven and Earth, presenting your petitions, advocating your interests, and placing before you the results and determinations of the great King and Head of the Church, for your solemn sanction and approval; and, so long as we continue faithful to your interests and the important trust committed to us by Him, whose servants we profess to be, may we not hope to gain your attention and confidence, and that you will heartily respond to the *all things* we are commanded of God to make known unto you, and submit yourselves to every ordinance that God hath appointed in his word, and to us in the Lord, as they who must give account? As much is necessary to give consistency to your call, as well as to enjoy the benefits we hope to reap from our association.

*First*, then, I understand your invitation to imply, a deep conviction of your spiritual necessities, and an earnest desire to share in the ministry of Reconciliation. To you it would be unnecessary, and remote from my present object, to prove the Divine appointment of the Christian ministry. This is too well known and established to be disputed by any believer in Christianity,—an institution in which we have no less than the high and holy authority of the Great Teacher, in the commission with which he invested the first heralds of the Cross, saying: “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world;” and which is corroborated by Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians: “Wherefore,” he saith, “when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the per-



fecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." And again, "When the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." That salvation is ordinarily to be attained without a preached gospel, you do not believe, for how, demands the apostle, "shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" And, as the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates the benefits of Redemption, making the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation: therefore, you have raised the Macedonian cry, "Come over and help us." The grand object contemplated by the gospel ministry with regard to man is, the exhibition of his sinful and miserable condition, as a fallen creature; his exposure to the wrath and curse of God due to sin, and as, in this state, "without hope and without God in the world." But its peculiar, as well as delightful province is to lead the contrite soul to the Savior—to point to "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world"—to encourage the hope of mercy from that exhaustless source of infinite love, and to beget implicit confidence in the Divine faithfulness to all his exceeding great and precious promises, which, in Christ Jesus, are yea, and in him, amen; building them upon their most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost. These are the leading ideas in the gospel and it is the conviction of their truth, and incalculable importance that prompted your desire to have one to "break among you the bread of life." I certainly very much mistake the character of your whole

proceedings, from the first, if this is not the prominent and prevalent intent and purpose of your hearts in sending for me.

But, *Second*,—Your call implies that you recognize in the gospel, and its ordinances, the appointed and effectual means of promoting your spiritual improvement,—that they are calculated to promote man's spiritual improvement, and provide for his state of perfection hereafter, and that you desire, not only, to build upon that foundation laid in Zion, your faith and hope, but to go on to perfection.

Cornelius was a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, ere he had that vision of the Angel, which resulted in the Mission of the Apostle. He had knowledge sufficient to convince him that he was a sinner, but he knew neither the extent, nor the demerit of his sins ; nor the sovereign remedy provided for them. The evil nature, and the fearful consequences of transgression appear to have been felt by him, and evidenced by the prayers and alms which came up for a memorial before God—but the twilight only proved to him the necessity, and made him more solicitous for the full and perfect day, that he might know the will of God more perfectly. Hence his obedience to the heavenly mandate, “ Send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon whose surname is Peter : he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.”

Is it not so with you ? You believe, do you not, that where there is no vision, the people perish : but, that where the word and ordinances of religion are duly, and regularly administered, they are subservient, by the blessing of God, to your growth in grace, and increase in the knowledge of Him, whom to know is life Eternal.

The very terms employed by the Spirit to represent spiritual things, as well as our own experience, prove that a constant application to these sublime realities is essential to progress in the divine life, nay, even to its very existence.

Is Christ compared to bread—the bread of life? Who knows not that its daily use is necessary to our comfort and health? Is the Gospel compared to water—to living waters? how long could we exist without this necessary element? Yea, it may be safely affirmed, that the common bounties of Providence—the air that we breathe, the aliment we receive, the raiment wherewith we are clad, are not more necessary to our bodily comfort, than are the influences of piety—the pleasures it imparts, and the privileges it confers, to our well-being as rational and immortal creatures. And is not the mournful fact well established, that those who have once enjoyed those privileges, and attended regularly upon the means of grace, but who have become irregular and remiss, or perhaps ceased altogether in their attendance, have very little indeed, to distinguish them from those who “care for none of these things?” That grace, if ever they had any, is languishing, and the things that remain—the early impressions of divine truth, and the solemn sacredness they were wont to throw around divine things—are ready to die. We stay not to ascertain the cause; the fact is apparent, and that we deplore. You, my brethren, as well as I, have been pained to find many, in this, as in other cities of our Union, who have been, I had almost said cradled in the Christian religion, and whose very infant breath was met with the social aspirations of praise and prayer to God in the devout of family—many, who have been fostered and reared in such a religious atmosphere, in the midst of sanctuary privileges, and Sabbath joys—many, who professed deep devotion to the interests of religion at home, who could, when abroad—when landed on the Western shores of the Atlantic, not only forget their God, and their country’s piety; but so far forget themselves as to be found in the ranks of the careless and open despisers of the Gospel—the Sabbath breaker—the dissolute, and the profane! O, it cries to Heaven!—It is a stigma



on the name, "old countryman." It is a stigma on the deep toned piety of others. It is a stain upon the well earned glory of our fathers, who fought and fell in defence of the faith once delivered to the Saints. It is justifying the charge I have heard, not once, nor twice, but often, that there was more of the *form* than of the *power* of godliness among our nation.

But I hope better things of you, brethren, and things that accompany salvation, though I thus speak, and speak it, that, knowing the extent and deplorable effects of the evil, you may aid us in our efforts to restore the backslider, and, more, that he is your brother, your kinsman according to the flesh. I am not without the hope that this is one of the great objects contemplated by the organization of the first Presbyterian church, in this place ; that it may meet the desire long cherished, and laudable in itself, that you might have the opportunity of worshipping the God of your Fathers, after the manner of your fathers. And that, viewing these ordinances now happily established among you, you have formed the resolution, and will be ever ready to respond, in the fervent language of the psalmist, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple." To improve under the ministry of the word, you must exercise faith, humility, and prayer. Faith in the testimony God hath given of his Son. Humility, as essential to all spiritual improvement, and Prayer, as the appointed and effectual means of securing the blessings we need. For "thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker. Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me." Pray for a disposition to take your place as learners, sitting meekly at His feet, that you may know what is the hope of your calling, and what the riches of the glory of



his inheritance in the Saints, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

*Third*,—Your call implies that you will be conscientious in your attendance upon the public ordinances of religion. It would be easy to prove this to be your duty, both from the word of God, and the standards of the church, of which you have declared your approbation ; as well as the unspeakable advantage of it to yourselves.—But, we choose rather to present it as your privilege, a privilege too that would be highly prized by those who have “no man, to care for their souls.” I have always esteemed it a certain mark of the value set upon, and the improvement derived from the ordinances of grace, when the people are conscientious in their attendance upon them, and not prevented by slight excuses. And, I ask, are not ministers warranted in expecting this of their people? Is it consistent with their solemn engagements to give him all encouragement in his labors, that when, and after he has been diligent in his studies throughout the week—taxing all the powers of body and mind, that he may give to each his portion of meat in due season, on repairing to the sanctuary he finds you among the absent, and that without just and sufficient cause? What would the Apostle have thought, if, after being sent for all the way to Joppa, had he come and found some, resting listlessly in their own dwelling ; others, away on a pleasure excursion ; others, peradventure, posting up the accounts of the past week ; others, engaged in correspondence with their friends, or, perhaps, reading a newspaper! Would he have dreamed they were in earnest in the prayer, “Come over and help us”? But, not so with Cornelius and his friends, who were not only present to see, but earnestly desirous of hearing words of him. “We are all here,” mark it, they were few *all told*, but they could say, “We are

*all* here :” not an absentee to complain of, and no apologies from absent members : they were all met with one accord, in one place, and God crowned their meeting with his presence and enriching blessings ; for “ while Peter yet spake, the Holy Ghost fell on all them who heard the word.” Blessed result of a blessed meeting ! Let us only have the faith and prayer, and we will have the return of Apostolic times. Besides, who may tell their loss, in causelessly forsaking the assembling of themselves together with the people ? Ministers are not always, nor can they be expected to be, uniform in their preaching ; but if habitual in your attendance, you may receive at one time, what you fail to secure at another : and who knows, but the very sermon which you omitted to hear, was the one happily calculated to remove your doubts, dispel your fears, confirm your faith, strengthen and encourage your hope, and fill you with a foretaste of Heaven. You may be ready with the reply, that the circumstances of this interview were extraordinary. Granted, and what then ? That the repeated publication of the same truths is not so necessary and important to you, as they were to them ? You will not say so ; and no good Christian will, thoughtlessly, absent himself from the house of God : and, if such a case should happen, I will not feel myself so much slighted, as that Being who says, “ Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is.” I put in a claim, therefore, at the outset of my labors among you, upon your regular, and punctual attendance, on the ground that I have not come, or forced myself upon you, unasked ; but that ye have sent for me,

*Fourth*,—Your call implies a design to support the Gospel Ministry. You indeed *promise* all due support : and this is just as well as generous, to give of your

means as "the Lord hath prospered you." You subscribe to the sentiment and doctrine of the New Testament, which is agreeable to the Old, as well as to common sense, "that they who preach the Gospel, should *live* of the Gospel." And this, I have reason to believe, you will do. But there are other ways in which you may support the gospel, besides this of giving of your worldly substance; and which are to be done, while you leave not the other undone.

And, *First*,—You can, and, I trust, you will support us, by your example—your Godly example. Let the officers, and members of this church, send abroad the influence of a holy life and godly conversation. Let men take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus. Let your intercourse with each other, and wherever you go be of such a character, as will, manifest you "epistles of Christ, known and read of all men;" and that the cause and interests of the Redeemer, and of your fellow men are near your hearts, and you will do more to aid and encourage us, in carrying out the grand design, than if thousands of gold and silver were at your command, without these essential graces of the spirit. If alive to whatever relates to the welfare of Zion; cordially acquiescing in the various plans of Christian benevolence, for extending the saving knowledge of Jesus; faithful in the discharge of the duties enjoined upon you in the word of God; and improving every opportunity of letting "your light shine before men, that they may glorify your Father who is in Heaven," then, are you most efficient agents in this high and holy cause, which demands and deserves all, and more than all we are able to render, or express: and the means, at the same time, of lasting good to the perishing souls around you. And, who, I ask, cannot ex-



ert this influence? who so poor, and weak, or worthless, i.e. in their own estimation, as to be unable to do Him this reverence? None! no, not one. The unostentatious efforts of humble piety have been owned and blessed of God, to an extent that Eternity alone can reveal, and will be, wherever they are employed from a sincere love to God, and the souls of men. Let not the most obscure imagine they can do nothing for Christ—let *all* remember no difference of ability, implies a difference of obligation. The man who received the *one* talent, was as responsible as he who had received the *ten*; for to one and all is the command, “Occupy till I come.” It only requires resolution, and patient continuance in well doing, to accomplish much. Exert your influence with some friend, or neighbor who may be thoughtless of the things belonging to his peace, urge them to come with you, and you will do them good, who may be stout-hearted and far from righteousness: and this may be blessed to them, and through them to many others, that are ready to perish.

While labouring for some time in England, there was a remarkable case of a poor, but pious operative, who was the means of securing first, the attendance of one, then of another, and another, till finally, a church was gathered that remains, and prospers to this day.

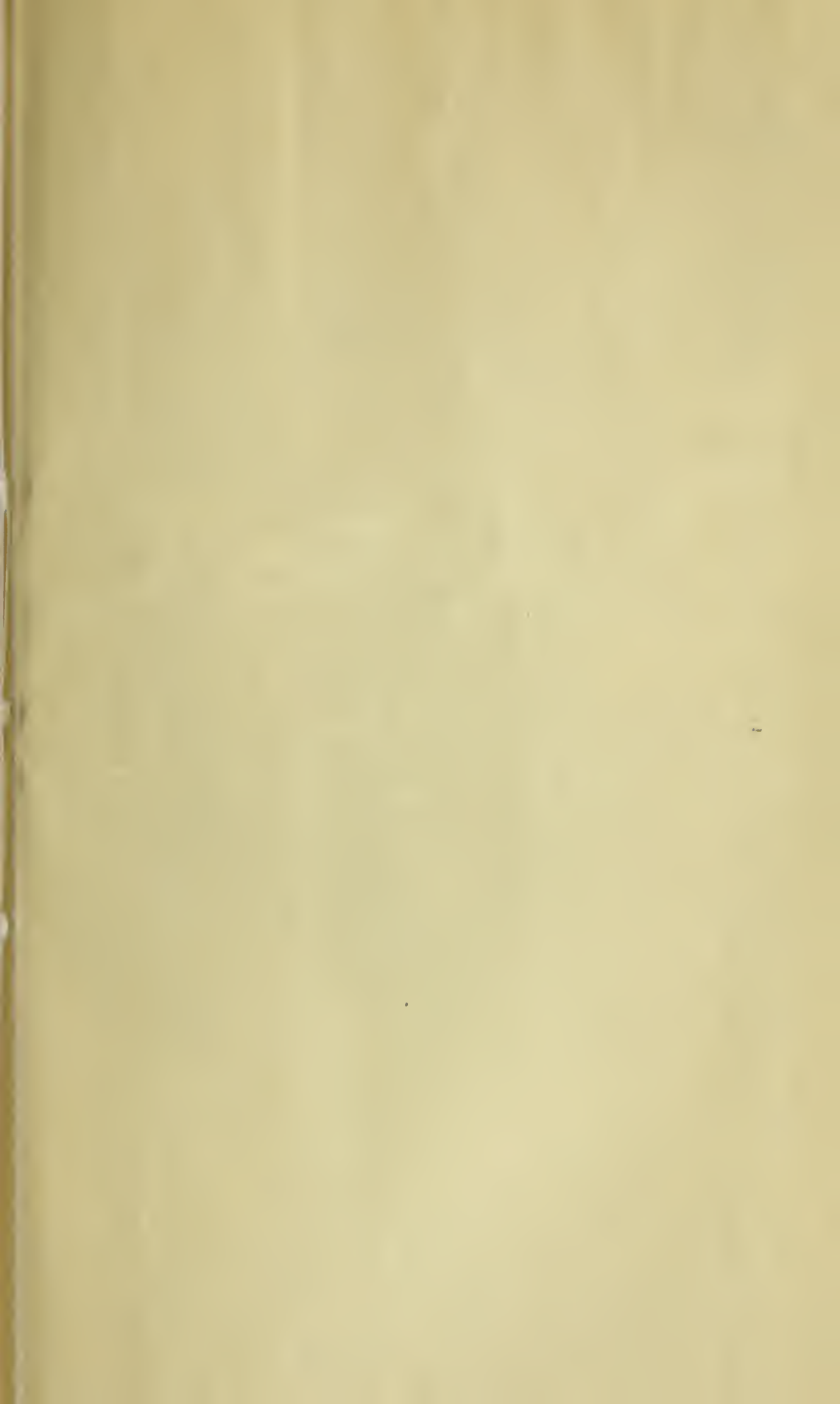
*Second*,—Support us by your prayers. Even an Apostle, you remember, claimed an interest in the prayers of those to whom he wrote. “Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified.” Prayer is one of the tried and successful means of a church’s prosperity, and without fervant, believing prayer, no church can be built up; I had almost said, no church *ought* to be built up; and certain it is, that God grants no success to those, who restrain prayer before Him. Not that He is ignor-



ant of our wants, but that He will be honored in the way He has appointed of bestowing blessings.

In answer to prayer, I trust, I am before you ; sustain us, we pray you, by your continued importunity at the throne of grace : and then shall we have come to you, and remain with you, in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of peace. In one word, let it ever be borne in mind, that the presence and blessing of God are essential to usefulness and success. We see this in the natural world, how much more in the spiritual. However ample, and well adapted to the place, may be the qualifications of the ministry—and however spontaneously you may co-operate, in all his plans and suggestions ; yet, without the blessing of God, all will be of little avail. Moved by the unspeakable grandeur of his theme, in the deep solicitude of his soul for the welfare of the flock, he may bring all the powers of an enlightened mind, and an affectionate heart to the work before him. He may, under an awful sense of the approaching Judgment : the glories of Heaven, and the terrors of Hell, awake the thunders of Sinai, and portray the blackness of despair. Or—lost in the ineffable love of the Savior, he may point to the bleeding sacrifice of the Cross, and, in view of that crowning motive, urge, and beseech men to “ be reconciled to God ;” and yet, without that blessed influence from on high, he will speak, and labor in vain. Paul may plant, Apollos may water, God alone gives the increase. But to an assembly of his Saints, lying lowly at his feet, and offering up the humble, fervent, yet believing prayer ; “ Lord, let thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven ;” the windows of Heaven will be opened, and the spirit will be poured out in copious effusion, till there be not room enough to receive it. Even so—AMEN.







The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present. The author then goes on to discuss the various factors which have shaped the development of the United States, including the influence of the British, the Spanish, and the French. He also discusses the role of the American people in the creation of the new nation. The paper concludes by stating that the study of the history of the United States is a task of great importance, and that it is one which should be undertaken by all who are interested in the future of the country.

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